



United States Department of the Interior

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Dear Cooperator:

We are starting a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for BLM-managed lands within the Glennallen District. The RMP will replace our 1980 Management Framework Plan that we are currently operating under. Obviously, the 1980 document is outdated and does not reflect current issues.

Resource Management Plans guide management action on the public lands covered by the plan. In Alaska, this means non-selected BLM lands as well as those lands selected by the State of Alaska and Native Corporations but not conveyed yet. Resource management plan decisions establish goals and objectives for resource management (ie. desired future conditions), the measures needed to achieve those goals and objectives, and parameters for using BLM-managed lands. They identify lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any applicable restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses. Resource management plan decisions are made on a broad scale and guide subsequent site-specific day-to-day decisions.

Given the mixed land ownership pattern in the planning area and the consideration of State and Native selected lands, collaboration and cooperation in this process will be a necessity. Our intent throughout the process is to make it as open as possible and to get input from cooperators at every step of the process.

So that you have more than a general description of what a Resource Management Plan does, here are examples of the types of decisions that will be made as part of the planning process:

- Vegetation: Identify desired future conditions for vegetative resources, including the desired mix of vegetative types, structural stages, and landscape and riparian functions, and provide for native plant, fish, and wildlife habitats. Identify the actions and areawide use restrictions needed to achieve desired vegetative conditions.
- Cultural resources: Identify areawide criteria or site-specific use restrictions that apply to special cultural resource issues, including traditional cultural properties, that may affect the location, timing, or method of development or use of other resources in the

planning area. Identify measures to pro-actively manage, protect, and use cultural resources.

- Fish and Wildlife: Acknowledging the States' role in managing fish and wildlife and working in close coordination with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, describe existing and desired population and habitat conditions for major habitat types that support a wide variety of game and nongame species. Identify actions and areawide use restrictions needed to achieve desired population and habitat conditions while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationships.
- Recreation: Identify allowable kinds and levels of recreation to sustain the goals, standards, and objectives that balance the public's recreation demands with the natural resource capabilities within the planning area. Identify the general management strategies, including major actions, limitations, and restrictions required to maintain recreational values. Identify Special Recreation Management Areas.
- OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) use: All public lands must be designated as "open," "limited," or "closed" to OHVs (43 CFR 8342.1).
- Lands and Realty: Identify lands that are available for disposal provided they meet the criteria provided in FLPMA (Section 203 and 206) or other statutes and regulations. Identify criteria under which acquisitions of land would occur. Identify proposed withdrawal areas or those areas where existing withdrawals may be revoked. Identify where and under what circumstances land use authorizations such as major leases and land use permits may be granted.
- Fluid minerals (Oil and Gas, Geothermal Resources, and Coal Bed Methane): Identify areas open to leasing, subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form. Identify areas open to leasing, subject to major constraints such as no surface occupancy stipulations. Identify areas closed to leasing.
- Locatable Minerals: Identify areas open or closed to the operation of the mining laws, mineral material disposal, and nonenergy leasing. In open areas, identify any areawide terms, conditions, or other special considerations needed to protect resource values.
- Administrative designations: Consistent with the goals, standards and objectives for the planning area, make the following determinations: Designate Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and identify goals, standards, and objectives for each area, as well as general management practices and uses, including necessary constraints and mitigation measures. Designate Research Natural Areas and Outstanding Natural Areas as types of ACECs using the ACEC designation process.

How is all this done and how are these decisions made? The Resource Management Planning process involves several steps:

1. Identify issues and concerns through a scoping process. This is where the the public's input is very important. We need their input to know what aspects of public land management they are concerned about and to assist in developing appropriate outcomes. For Glennallen's resource management planning process, scoping will be occurring during the winter of 2003. Specific community meeting times and places will be published soon in local papers, newsletters, and on our website.
2. Assess information. Assessment is the process of synthesizing, analyzing, and

interpreting data. In this case, conclusions drawn from assessments facilitate informed decision making. Our Geographic Information System (GIS) will be used for data storage, analysis, and display. The data as well as input from the public will be used to develop the next two steps. This step is already happening but will continue throughout this winter and the summer of 2003.

3. Identify desired outcomes. In this step desired outcomes (goals, standards, objectives) are developed to address identified issues. Information from steps one and two are used in this step. If there are issues or concerns regarding appropriate outcomes, a range of desired outcomes may be evaluated as alternatives in the planning process to determine the most appropriate outcomes to select as planning decisions. Step number 3 is tentatively scheduled for fall/winter 2003/2004.
4. Identify allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes. When accomplishing this step, we will consider resource development potential, levels of use, and restrictions to best achieve goals, standards, and objectives. These uses and restrictions are based on resource protection needs and social and economic factors, and represent the most appropriate mix of uses for the land. Different protection and restoration measures and the availability of areas for certain uses, levels of uses, and restrictions are presented as alternatives in the land use plan and are evaluated in the associated NEPA document. This step will occur concurrent with Step number 3 and will involve another round of public participation (to review alternatives).
5. NEPA analysis. The alternative that meets statutory requirements, best achieves the goals and policies of BLM as reflected through BLM's Strategic Plan and State Director guidance, and best resolves the issues pertinent to the planning effort should be identified as the preferred alternative or proposed plan. This preferred alternative will be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement. A draft EIS will be written in spring/summer of 2004, with a final scheduled to come out in 2005.

Hopefully this letter will serve to inform you of the Resource Management Planning process and to invite you to participate in the process. As stated above, your participation is necessary in order to make this plan one that is realistic and implementable. Please contact Bruce Rogers, BLM planner in Glennallen, for more information on how to get involved.

Sincerely,

Ramone Baccus McCoy
Field Manager

